

# MEMORIAL PARK ONCE EYESORE

Keats says: - "A thing of beauty is a joy forever," and there is not a citizen in Carbondale who does not rejoice in the beauty of Monumental Park. It is one of the most perfectly lovely little spots that is to be found in any city. Ten years ago it was covered with weeds and furnished a pleasant resting place for hogs and cows. It was a perfect eyesore and filled everybody with disgust. This beautiful place is due to the thought and energy of one man -- J.M. Alexander. He conceived the idea of making the park what it is, and by his energy carried it to successful completion.

The first public meeting called to the aid of the park was Sept. 18, 1884. Preliminary to this on Sept. 10, 1884, at a regular meeting of W.H. Davies Post, G.A.R., the first action was taken. An appeal was issued to the people proposing the fencing in of the grounds and the erection of a monument and a fountain. Committees were appointed and J.B. Van Bergen was made president. The meeting for the 18th was called. At this meeting J.M. Alexander and the Rev. W.H. Platt made addresses explaining the project and asking cooperation.

The city appropriated \$1,000 and the remainder was raised by entertainments and by individual subscriptions. W.H. Davies Post gave \$160. The first subscription was received from a poor woman and was twenty-five cents. The largest individual subscription was \$100. Mr. E.H. Castle of Chicago gave the largest outside subscrip-

tion. The total cost was \$4,645.09.

## PARK DEDICATED 80 YEARS AGO

The monument was dedicated May 30, 1885, and the park was opened to the public. It is supported by an appropriation of the councils of \$200 per year. Generally a part of this appropriation is returned. The board of park commissioners is made up of the mayor, the presidents of the select and common councils and three members elected annually by the Grand Army of the Republic. In summer it is open each evening to the public.

This park has had an educating influence on our people and many a home in the city has been improved in appearance because of its influence. Carbondale people are justly proud of it and strangers are struck with its appearance when they pass it by. It is to be hoped that the grounds around City Hall soon will be made equally beautiful.

(Editor's note: They were, but their beauty faded over the years and eventually was replaced by the automobile age practicalities of a city garage and a parking lot).